UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

December 2, 2005

MEMORANDUM

To: Campus Planning Committee (CPC)

From: Christine Taylor Thompson, Planning Associate
University Planning

Subject: **Record of the December 1, 2005 CPC Meeting**

Attending: Carole Daly (Chair), Dietrich Belitz, Virginia Cartwright, Nancy Cheng, Darin Dehle, Patti Hachten, Douglas Kennett, Rich Linton, Gregg Lobisser, Andrea Matthews, Colin McArthur, Dennis Munroe, Steve Pickett, Chris Ramey, Gordon Sayre, Greg Stripp, Rob Thallon

Guests: Meghann M. Cuniff (ODE), Tim Evans (SRG Partnership), Larry Gilbert (CMGS), Jim Hutchison (User Group chair), Jon Schleuning (SRG Partnership), Eva Sylvester (ODE), Fred Tepfer (UPO), Zach Vishanoff

Staff: Christine Thompson (University Planning)

Agenda:
ONAMI at the University of Oregon Project – Schematic Design – Check-in Review

1. ONAMI at the University of Oregon Project – Schematic Design – Check-in Review

Background: The chair explained that the committee is being asked to review the in-progress schematic design for the ONAMI project focusing on the physical design, not programmatic elements.

Staff summarized the project's key *Campus Plan* policies and other campus design issues identified by committee members at the July 12, 2005 CPC meeting (a copy of the meeting record was provided via e-mail).

Fred Tepfer, University Planning Office staff and project planner, explained that the design process first focused on internal, underground elements. The design team is now working to establish broad design principles that will guide development of the aboveground design. Therefore, this is an excellent time to provide input and direction.

Jim Hutchinson, project user group chair said the project is very complex due to a confined building site and a complex program. The planning process schedule was slowed down to ensure all issues can be properly addressed. The design team began the process by defining the program and the site (discussed at the prior CPC meeting).

Recently it established design principles.

Design principles for the underground portion include optimizing the relatively small footprint, maximizing the existing high-performance (low-vibration) site, configuring the layout to meet programmatic needs, and establishing connections to existing and proposed future buildings. Design principles for the aboveground portion include resolving existing maintenance and design concerns (e.g., the Huestis Hall light well), improving the intersection of Huestis and Streisinger Halls, bringing natural light into the new underground level in a way that relates to the aboveground open space, and enhancing the open-space character.

Tim Evans, SRG Partnership, said specific design solutions have not been determined; the overall goal was to improve the existing open space. He summarized the issues the final design will address:

- Ensure good connections to existing and future science buildings (an underground circulation corridor is proposed along the northern edge).
- Resolve the Huestis Hall light-well maintenance concerns.
- Eliminate the dark, uninviting space between Huestis and Streisinger Halls.
- Resolve the lack of a Huestis Hall main entrance.
- Make the existing paved pedestrian plaza area in the middle of the open space more inviting.
- Salvage and/or replace all affected portions of the Science Walk and associated decorative elements.
- Provide a welcoming entrance to the below-ground space (likely by using a stairwell that allows natural light to penetrate to the lower level).
- Preserve as much of the Deschutes Hall entry landscaped area, which is used for various functions, and more clearly define the commonly used diagonal entrance.
- Create a better entry into the open space at the southeast corner of Huestis Hall where pedestrian activity is likely to increase.
- Define and protect the site lines from 13th Avenue to the new ONAMI entrance and to the future science building entrance.
- Keep aboveground development out of the designated open-space boundaries.
- Carefully locate mechanical and electrical equipment to limit vibration interference (potential locations include the northwest corner near the entrance and within Huestis Hall).
- Create a central daylighting penetration to provide natural light below and to establish a connection with the aboveground open space (the current proposed location is on axis with the Deschutes Hall main entrance in the center of the open space).
- Study potential opportunities to relate the open space and building design to existing axes and structural rhythms as a way to connect new construction to existing elements.
- Locate exhaust fans on the Huestis Hall roof.

Jon Schleuning, SRG Partnership, added that the project would need to use almost the entire available space dimensions of the designated open space.

Larry Gilbert, CMGS, described how the project would resolve some existing landscape concerns including:

- The secondary diagonal Deschutes Hall entry walkway, which is used as the primary access.
- The overgrown hemlocks between Huestis and Streisinger Halls that create a dark, unwelcoming entrance.
- The unhealthy pear grove planting in the paved plaza.

Larry said the Science Green has a formal design defined primarily by trees, much like other campus open spaces. The proposed project will attempt to save as many of the healthy trees as

possible (almost all were planted about ten years ago). However, it appears that underground construction will require removal of a substantial number of trees, thirty-five in all. This includes the sickly pears, trees along the eastern edge of Huestis Hall, and some trees along the western edge of Deschutes Hall. The proposed design already has been modified to preserve most of the Deschutes Hall entrance landscaping. Of the trees proposed for removal, two have potential significance. One is the large Caucasian Wingnut at the southeast corner of Huestis Hall. Alternatives to preserve the tree were explored; however, three other nice specimens exist on campus, ensuring the its significance as a teaching tree is addressed, and it has an invasive root system. The other significant tree is a donor/memorial tree. It is relatively young, however, so it can be moved to an appropriate location.

Larry displayed the applicable patterns saying that the design will address them as it is developed.

Larry presented some sketches showing potential landscape design concepts. He said the concepts shared some similar themes:

- A lighted glass element at the new entry.
- A central skylight element to allow natural light into the basement and establish a visual connection between the upper and lower levels.
- Diagonal walks leading to the main building entrances.
- Ways to activate the 13th Avenue edge (e.g., sitting walls).
- Ways to address elevation changes (e.g., raised planters).
- Lightweight soils and limited use of large trees.
- Trees to define the open space.

Discussion: Members provided the following comments:

- The central skylight element is a good idea; it can be used to help define the entrance to Deschutes Hall.
- Removing trees along the Huestis Hall is a concern because it will expose the building's harsh façade. Consider other ways to soften the façade, for example, by using vines.
- Perhaps it is more appropriate to establish the open space as the "front lawn" rather than as a wooded area to draw pedestrians into the open space and to the new ONAMI entrance, similar to the way the open space in front of the Knight Library functions.
- Keep taller elements (trees) to the side to maintain an open center.
- The existing pear grove functions well as an outdoor room just off the active 13th Avenue axis. The use of smaller-scaled trees to create a pedestrian-scaled "room" (similar to the Chiles Hall entry area) is effective and should be incorporated into the new design.
- Axes connect the campus's larger open spaces. Use the grove idea to serve as a connection and transition between the 13th Avenue axis and the larger Science Green.
- Build a gathering space adjacent to the 13th Avenue axis similar to other spaces on campus including the raised seating areas adjacent to Fenton Hall and Campus Heart.
- Design the central skylight element as a landmark integrated into the open-space design.
- When designing the new entrance, establish transparency and aesthetic division between the buildings to break up the large building blocks.
- Try to minimize the use of raised planters, which are not as inviting and effective as at-grade plantings, particularly tree plantings.
- Do everything possible to incorporate large trees into the design. Large trees are the most important defining elements of campus open spaces.
- Use landscape elements to define the outdoor room and buffer the open space from Franklin Boulevard.
- The project team's effort to design an open space of high quality is greatly appreciated. Do everything possible to maintain this effort throughout the design and construction process, despite likely funding limitations. The open space will be the element of the project that the campus will know and see.

A member noted the possible benefits of constructing a future building at the northern end of the green to define the open-space terminus and serve as a buffer to Franklin Boulevard. He questioned the viability of this idea since it violates the *Campus Plan*. Staff explained that the CPC discussed this idea last year during the *Campus Plan* update process and decided to preserve the designated open space in its original configuration, extending to Franklin Boulevard. Another member added that this was part of a larger discussion about the importance of campus edges and conveying open space elements and a welcoming front to the public. The proposed project, however, does not preclude the potential to pursue this idea in the future.

A guest expressed concern about the lack of opportunity for the public to provide input and questioned why a public hearing had not occurred. Staff explained that a public hearing is not required for individual building projects as long as they are in compliance with the *Campus Plan*. Plan amendments and updates, such as the update process that took place last year, require a public hearing and include numerous opportunities for public input. The guest expressed concern that top media players were in collusion about how information is being disseminated and encouraged committee members to become better informed by looking at ONAMI information online. He also distributed a copy of a related article.

In response to a member's question, Chris Ramey, University Planning Office Director and Architect, said the ONAMI project does not include 13th Avenue improvements. The project will improve the entire Science Green, which is well beyond the required minimum open-space enhancements. The architect noted that the Carson Hall service area limits potential to enhance the southern open space terminus at 13th Avenue.

Action: No formal action was taken. The committee's comments will be taken into consideration as the design process for the ONAMI at the University of Oregon Project moves forward.

Please contact this office if you have questions.

cc. Paul Bloch, Computer and Information Science (Deschutes Building Manager)
Jane Brubaker, Facilities Services
Meghann M. Cuniff, ODE
Tim Evans, SRG Partnership
Larry Gilbert, CMGS
Jim Hutchison, Chemistry (User Group chair)
Dave Johnson, Chemistry
Roger Kerrigan, Facilities Services
Peter Keyes, Architecture (University Senate)
Tim King, Facilities Services
Charlene Lindsay, Facilities Services
Mike Marusich Neuroscience (Streisinger Building Manager)
Monte Matthews, Veterinary Services (Streisinger Building Manager)
Ellen McCumsey, Neuroscience (Huestis Building Manager)
Steve Nystrom, Eugene Planning
Beth Prescott, Neuroscience (Streisinger Building Manager)
Bill Roberts, Neuroscience (Huestis Building Manager)
Jon Schleuning, SRG Partnership
George Sprague, Biology (Streisinger Building Manager)
Eva Sylvester, ODE
Fred Tepfer, University Planning
Bill Trevarrow, Neuroscience (Huestis Building Manager)
Bruce Wilson, Molecular Biology (Streisinger Building Manager)
Zach Vishanoff